Abstracts

Shamima Akter – University of Manitoba "Defending Russell's Theory of Definite Descriptions Against the Objection Arising from the Argument from Incompleteness"
In my research, I will be focused on Bertrand Russell's theory of definite descriptions and a very significant problem with this theory. Moreover, I will be using another excellent theory in the area of philosophy of language which is Scott Soames' alternative conception about meaning and assertion. According to Russell's theory of definite descriptions, a descriptive sentence of the form ⌜The F is G⌝ expresses the following proposition: exactly one thing is an F and whatever is an F is G. If the definite description ⌜The F⌝ contained in the sentence ⌜The F is G⌝ is satisfied by more than one object, then it is an incomplete definite description. One of the major objections of this theory is known as the objection arising from incomplete definite descriptions. According to this objection, a speaker by her utterance of a sentence containing an incomplete definite description often succeeds in saying something true despite the fact that such a sentence always expresses a false proposition. This particular objection against Russell's theory arises because of an ignorance concerning the distinction between the meaning of a sentence and the assertion made by a speaker by using that sentence in a particular context. To address this distinction between meaning and assertion Scott Soames' theory concerning the connection between meaning and assertion has been adopted. With the help of this theory, it has been shown that the problem arising from incomplete definite descriptions does not pose a genuine threat to Russell's theory.

Janelle Allyson Tandoc Gormley – University of Nebraska – Lincoln "Against Pismenny and Brogaard: A Defense of Neo-Aristotelian Friendship"
Friendship is obviously sometimes morally assessable, but it is controversial whether the nature of friendship itself incorporates such standards. Neo-Aristotelians typically think it does. However, if Neo-Aristotelians accept a certain framework of friendship, then this understanding of friendship undermines the very goods that friendship provides. Pismenny and Brogaard press this objection within such a framework but various features of that framework remain optional. I will argue that Neo-Aristotelians can not only capture the values of friendship, but more broadly, can assuage worries about the demandingness of the moralization of friendship by co-recognizing the other forms of friendship.

Dr. Lyndal Grant – University of Florida "Conditional Desires and the Problem of Moral Fetishism"
It may seem obvious that good people want to do what is right. But philosophers are deeply divided about whether it is virtuous to be motivated to do what is right as such, or under that description. Some argue that being motivated in this way is always morally praiseworthy; others claim that it amounts to a kind of moral fetishism. Both of these views face apparent counterexamples. I argue that whether wanting to do what is right as such amounts to a kind of moral fetishism depends on the deeper structure of the agent's motivations, and in particular, on whether their desire is to do what is right is conditional on their moral beliefs. The resulting view occupies a neglected middle ground between both sides in the debate, and better accommodates our intuitions about cases; it is not always wrong to want to do what is right as such, though it sometimes is!

Minseok Kim – Syracuse University "Properties and the Concept Horse Paradox"
In this paper, I propose a novel theory of properties in which a property is understood
in terms of a way of being (i.e., a way that things are): a property (e.g. the property of being human)
is an object that encodes a way of being (e.g. being human). It will be shown that this definition
gives rise to two different metaphysical aspects of a property: predicational aspect and objectual
aspect – e.g. the property of being human has the predicational aspect and the objectual aspect. I
claim that the predicate 'is F' expresses the predicational aspect of the property of being F and
the singular term 'the property of being F' expresses the objectual aspect of the property of being
F. Then, I show that this double-aspect theory of properties nicely resolves, first, the problem of
substitution failure between the predicate 'is F' and the singular term 'the property of being F',
and, second, the concept horse paradox.

Shih-Hao Liu – University of Miami "Philosophical Skepticism, Unconceived Serious Objections, and Moral Skepticism"
Recently, a new form of philosophical skepticism has been developed by several philosophers from the
consideration of so-called unconceived serious objections. The skepticism goes that if we can
not exclude that there are unconceived serious objections to philosophical theses we're considering
now, then our justification for these theses is compromised. In this paper, I'll argue that the skepticism
motivated by unconceived serious objections poses no threat to our beliefs in philosophical theses. I'll
argue that the skepticism will fall into a dilemma. Either we can be informed about what the serious
objections are like or not in detail. If we can be informed with details, then the unconceived serious
objections collapse into actually conceived objections. If we cannot, then unconceived serious
objections can hardly threaten our justification of philosophical theses. I conclude that the new
philosophical skepticism at hand has no skeptical force as skeptics expected.

Dr. Sarah McGrath – Princeton University "Ethics: How Hard Can It Be?"
Is there an *epistemic access asymmetry* between, on the one hand, moral truths, and, on the other, facts
about non-moral domains such as mathematics, history, and science? There is nothing paradoxical
about the thought that, say, the continuum hypothesis might lie beyond our cognitive grasp. But many
find it strange to think that truths about morality could be that hard to figure out. On anti-realist and
subjectivist views about morality, such an access asymmetry might be relatively easy to explain,
because on these views, what we morally ought to do is a function of what we desire. But according to
realists, moral facts are objective and mind-*in*dependent. If realism is true, and ethics can't be that hard,
then we need an explanation for the asymmetry that preserves the realist's commitment to a substantive
gap between thought and reality. I argue that the realist can explain the apparent asymmetry by
appealing to the fact that rules must "cognitively match" their targets.

João C. Miranda – University of Lisbon "A Fragmentalist Account of Epistemic Akrasia"
An agent S is epistemically akratic if and only if i) S believes that p and ii) S believes that they
shouldn't believe that p. The main debate about epistemic akrasia concerns its characterization and
explanation: what is needed is an account of what mechanisms make cases of epistemic akrasia
possible. Greco (2014) and Kearl (2020) have defended fragmentalist accounts of epistemic akrasia:
there is not one unique belief-formation system, and the possibility of epistemic akrasia rests on the
possibility of conflict between the different systems. I'll argue that their versions of fragmentalism fail,
for their responses to pressing worries about the meta-epistemological theory that underlies them –
epistemic expressivism – are unsatisfactory. I will then rescue fragmentalism by proposing a version

that focuses, not on the linguistic/non-linguistic nature of the systems, but on the constraints under which beliefs are formed. Doing so will allow me to appeal to literature in psychology about a distinction between explicit reasoning and heuristic-based reasoning (Gigerenzer, Todd and the ABC Research Group, 1999; Kanheman, 2011). I'll argue that this version avoids the problems that plagued Greco and Kearl's account.

Michael Pierce – Ohio University "Moral Realism and Antirealism under a Correspondence Theory of Truth"
For a metaphysical realist committed to a correspondence theory of truth (i.e., a "correspondence realist"), ethical propositions pose a problem: the referents of ethical propositions do not appear to be real in the same way as the referents of factual propositions. The correspondence realist has a choice between moral antirealism and moral realism. However, to be a correspondence realist about morality would require a metaphysics hospitable to the existence of objectively moral states of affairs. This is a nasty bullet to bite; nevertheless, I argue that moral antirealism is not a viable alternative for the correspondence realist. The correspondence realist must also be a moral realist, and all that this entails for their metaphysics. To this end, I investigate three representative theories of moral antirealism: noncognitivism, error theory, and reductionism. I find that, in the context of correspondence realism, each theory fails to provide an alternative to moral realism, because each begs the question of moral realism's unviability. Meanwhile, moral realism "only" has to swallow the idea that moral states of affairs exist in the same way as factual states of affairs. It is left up to the reader whether, on this account, correspondence realism should be pursued further, or abandoned.

James Simpson – University of Florida "We Ought Not Virtue Signal"
Virtue signaling is "making a contribution to moral discourse that" principally "aims to…get others to make certain desired judgments about oneself". Justin Tosi and Brandon Warmke skillfully argue for the intuitively plausible view that virtue signaling degrades the quality of public moral discourse by undermining its deliberative function. However, Neil Levy and Evan Westra have raised some serious concerns about Tosi and Warmke's view in this connection. Basically, Levy and Westra argue that the social and epistemic benefits of virtue signaling either outweigh or offset many of the costs of virtue signaling such that virtue signaling, all things considered, actually promotes the deliberative function of public moral discourse. More than that, though, they argue that virtue signaling plays a valuable signaling role in public moral discourse. According to Levy and Westra, then, far from degrading the quality of public moral discourse, virtue signaling enhances the quality of public moral discourse. In this paper, I assume that Levy and Westra have the measure of things with respect to virtue signaling and its support of public moral discourse. Yet, even under such an assumption, I argue that one morally ought not virtue signal. There are two reasons for this. First, even if virtue signaling doesn't acutely degrade the quality of public moral discourse, it is still morally objectionable, since it is self-centered in a morally problematic way. Second, it's plausible to think that there's an alternative equally effective, socially beneficial, and simple form of signaling that isn't morally objectionable in the way that virtue signaling is. So, in ordinary circumstances, if one ought to signal, they ought to signal in this alternative way rather than virtue signal.

Yidi Wu – Boston University "Eros, Beauty, and Good in Diotima's Speech"
In Diotima's teaching on *eros* in the Symposium, the final stage of the ladder of *eros* leads the lover to the form of Beauty. Investigating what Beauty is and why it is there is worthy of consideration. This paper focuses on the nature of beauty in the restrictively aesthetic sense, as its significance should not be dismissed as secondary to its ethical implications. In contrast to Gabriel Lear's instrumental reading

of beauty in Platonic accounts, the paper seeks to explore beauty in its own right. The argument is that beauty possesses dual qualities of visibility and intelligibility that strike visions first and engender thoughts later. Additionally, beauty has a principle of harmony that is immanent to its essence, serving as the criterion for making aesthetic judgments. Furthermore, the paper aims to reveal the meaning and importance of the form of Beauty in Diotima's teaching. It introduces a new pathway for ascending to the form of Good under the drive of *eros*. Beauty is perceptible and intelligible to lovers, and the knowledge of Beauty leads to the knowledge of Good. Only in union with Good does the lover's *eros* become satiated, and the lover finds perfection. Good is the highest form that gives rise to truth and beauty in everything, even having the forming power to truth and beauty. Therefore, it is the perfect form for the lover to seek.